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## MY MOTHER READING, GOING BLIND

Leaning toward the light like a tree  
 my mother holds an armful of crows  
 that fly up from the page to perch  
 on her hands, rove across her  
 rounded shoulders. She doesn't wince  
 when a bulging shadow scratches  
 her neck or when the corn-thief  
 cries deep in her ear.  
 With a magnifying glass, she examines  
 claws and feathers and beaks,  
 lingering over them.  
 When she's done and closes the book,  
 removing the thick glasses  
 that hide her eyes, the birds  
 vanish in a stream of smoke.  
*Don't worry, I can almost hear her say,*  
*I see what I want.* She turns,  
 her gaze falling over stacks of letters  
 and dusty photographs, blurry piles  
 scattered at her feet.

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